

# The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, April 30. 1695.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT the word to express the sin of Lewdness in our English Tongue is of a feminine signification, being call'd whoring, from the word whore? Why mayn't it better be call'd Rogueing, and so made a masculine, since men are, at least most commonly, the Tempters, and of consequence have the greater share in the sin?

Ans. Who was't pillur'd the Lyon under the man? If words were by Institution, 'tis probable that men made most of 'em, tho now they are made, women have a pretty large share in the use of 'em. The Greek and Latin words, *πορνεία*, and *fornicatio*, seem to have a larger force then the English. However *Rogueing* here won't do, because 't has still too large a signification. But if we should be a little mistaken in our Judgment on these matters, we hope a wilful Ignorance will excuse us in this case, tho in no others.

Quest. 2. Pray what do you think is the meaning of that expression in the 10th of Ecclesiastes, the 20. "Curse not the King, no not in thy thought, and curse not the Rich in thy Bed-Chamber. For a Bird of the Air shall carry the Voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter?"

Ans. That we ought not in our greatest Freedom or privacies, to speak ill of great persons, seems to be the most natural meaning of the words, lest, (say some,) it should come to Light by Letter, or some such way of Communication. But this seems not to reach the thought, or conscience (as the 70 translate, and the Hebrew will bear it). Some therefore go another way to work, and think, that by the bird of the air here mention'd, an Angel is intended: who, if though he knows not the Thoughts absolutely, yet 'tis granted can give a shrewd Guess at 'em: And we know that the Devils are stiled in sacred Parable, as well as in *Lib. Zoor*, and other Jewish Writings, *הַטְּהוֹמִים הַשָּׁמַיִם*: "The Fowls, or Birds of the Air. And they are also stiled, "The Accusers of the Brethren. And, doubtless, these are very busie at Publick Feasts and Entertainments (which seem here referred to. See v. 12.) to do all the mischief they can, as in the case of Job's Sons, when the mind is open and dissolv'd, and men often speak whatever comes into it, all that they think, and sometimes a great deal more.

But because the word *curse* is here us'd, which most commonly relates to something actually pronounc'd by the Tongue, "wherewith we curse man; and because the thought or conscience here, seems only a laying the thing at the utmost, and to imply no more then the greatest secrecy and privacy, and to be explain'd by what comes after [thy Bed-Chamber, in the 70, *ἐν τῷ κρηναίῳ καὶ τῷ λυγαίῳ*.] Therefore we should be inclin'd to think, no more might be meant by the phrase [a bird of the Air, &c.] then, that what was spoken rashly and unadvisedly, among your greatest confidants, wou'd, 'tis probable, by some way or other, unexpected, and unknown to you, be brought to Light.

Quest. 3. What's Pedantry? what's Cant? what's stuff?

Ans. If we should say Cant was stuff, and stuff, Cant, and both Pedantry, you'd be apt to accuse us of all

three; therefore to be a little more explicit.

Pedantry is, we think, a purk affectation of Learning, little scraps of Latin, hard words, or a certain stiffness in discourse and behaviour. Cant is generally taken for unintelligible phrases, wherein some secret mysterious meaning is pretended, when there's nothing at all in it, or only some true and jejune notion. Stuff is next neighbour to cant, and a branch of the same family, only 'tis us'd for bombast expressions, or unconvincing arguments.

Quest. 4. What is the reason of the rising and falling of the Quicksilver in a weather-glass?

Ans. If it be from the Pressure of the Atmosphere, then the Pressure should be great upon the Pond of Quickilver (and consequently cause it to mount up) when the Air is thick, heavy and full of Rain. And when the Air is thin and bright, the pressure should be less, and the Quickilver fall, but we find the effect is contrary.

Quest. 5. What is the reason that in clear bright Evenings and dry Weather, the inside of Glass windows is commonly full of Drops; but in moist weather it is not so, the Glass being dry?

Ans. The two first paragraphs have been answer'd already, the last is a false supposition.

Quest. 6. Being in Company with a learned Physician, lately, he was pleas'd to offer this for a maxim, viz. Whatever succeeds is Rational; and whatever doth not succeed is not Rational. Now I desire your opinion of this matter, whether or no Rationality is to be attribut'd to the agent, or to the thing done by the agent? Your answer will much oblige, your humble servant.

Ans. Truly Sir we can say little to you in the affair, unless you would have us say something we don't understand our selves. You'd better enquire again of your Physician to know what he means, and take this for a maxim as long as you live, never to reason your self, or put any body else on reasoning upon things whereof they have no distinct Idea.

Quest. 7. What do you think, supposing a Stone, or Bullet thrown, or shot directly upright; has it not the same powerful motion in falling, especially nearer the Earth, as it had when thrown, or shot up? your judgment is desired in the matter.

Ans. Yes.

Quest. 8. Whether by Adam and Eve are meant single persons, or a whole generation of men and women which stocked all the world at once; or by Adam is to be understood onely the rational and masculine faculties of the soul, and by Eve the feminine and subservient; or how otherwise?

Ans. If you consider the 1st, 2d and 3d Chapters of Genesis, you will find that Adam and Eve were single persons. And tho the words may in their original signification, import the whole race of mankind, yet there are several Circumstances which show that it must be otherwise understood.

Quest. 9. If by Adam and Eve are meant single persons,



sons, and if Blackness be natural to the Ethiopian, and whiteness to the European; how can they derive their Original from one single person?

*Ans.* Blackness and whiteness are not natural to any people whatever, tis the effect of the Climate, English people that go near the Line shall in two or three Generations, tho they marry only with English, become Tawny and Black; the same is observed of all animals, our English Bull-dogs will in two or three Generations degenerate into a Cowardly mean spirited Cur beyond Sex, as is very well known to all Travellers.

Quest. 10. What's the cause of womens longing when with child.

*Ans.* Read Malbranches Search after Truth, he has given the most probable account of this matter that any author has yet done.

Quest. 11. There is a wager laid about these following Queries by two persons, who refer themselves to your Society, to give your opinion of them, what you assent to be the true product of two shillings and eleven pence, Multiplied by two shillings and eleven pence? also what is the product of thirty five pence, multiplied by thirty five pence? also how many Gallons, wine measure, will a box contain that is a foot square every way? Gentlemen, you are humbly desir'd to insert these in your next Saturdays Mercury, because they wholly depend upon your opinion to decide them, which will be a great satisfaction to the querist, and in doing it so speedily, you will very much oblige your most humble unknown servant.

*Ans.*  $2\text{ s. } 11\text{ p.} + 2\text{ s. } 11\text{ p.} = 8\text{ s. } 7\text{ p.}$  As for  $35\text{ d.} + 35\text{ d.}$  since the Integer here named is but a penny, the product is 2225 pence. But all Questions of this nature are equivocal, and the product may be either greater or lesser, in respect of the Integer; for instance, 5 shillings multiply'd into 5 shillings, may either be 25 s. or it may be but 1 s. 3 d. it will be 25 s. if 1 shilling be the Integer, it will be but  $\frac{1}{16}$  of a pound, or 1 s. 3 d. if 1 l. be suppos'd the Integer. As for the last question 'tis but dividing the Number of Solid Inches in a Cubic foot, by the Number of Solid Inches in a wine Gallon, and the Quota is the answer.

Quest. 12. Four persons being to have their shares of twenty shillings in the manner following, viz. A. to have  $\frac{1}{4}$ , B. to have  $\frac{1}{4}$ , C. to have  $\frac{1}{4}$ , D. to have  $\frac{1}{4}$ , the total being but 19 s. I would desire to know why they being paid, there should remain one shilling.

*Ans.* Because the Total of  $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$  and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 20 shillings, do not all together make up one 20 s. the question might as properly have been askt why 4 does make 5.

Q. 13. Having a great Inclination to learn the Mathematicks, I design to apply my self diligently to them, if you think it is probable that one of a Dull genius yet very desirous, can attain them without a Master, my present Circumstances not admitting one? I am an Arithmetician, but not a Latinist, therefore I desire to know what Books are most necessary in order to learn them, and explain their hard Terms?

*Ans.* Never expect to come to any without a Master. You'll learn more in two Years than in ten by your own Study. Therefore we can't advise you to Books to do yourself an Injury, or at least to lose your time.

Q. 14. I often hear of People selling themselves to the Devil, your Opinion whether the Devil personally appears in the shape of a man or woman, and makes an agreement as we amongst our selves. Or is it by the Allurement of some Temptation that they are drawn into some very great sin, and then their Consciences accusing them, they are afraid of being fetcht away at such a certain time? Pray your opinion, and you will much oblige your humble Servant.

*Ans.* If we may believe several such Persons at their Executions, they tell us of actual Contracts, personal Apparitions, &c.

### Advertisement.

The Unparallel'd Adventure will be drawn to morrow morning, being the 1st of May, at 8 of the Clock, at the Musick-Room in Charlot-street, Covent-Garden.

Mr. Sault's Translation of the 2d Volume of Malbranche's Search after Truth. To which is added the Life of Malbranch.

The History of all Religions in the World, from the Creation down to this Present Time. In Two Parts. The first containing their Theory, and the other relating their practices; With Various instances upon Every Head. To which is added, a Table of Heresies: as also a Geographical Map, shewing in what Countrey Each Religion is Practis'd. Written in a different Method from any thing yet published on this Subject. By William Turner, M. A. and Vicar of Walberton in Sussex.

\*\* The 16th Volume of the Athenian Mercury is now published, Resolving all the most nice and curious questions proposed by Ladies and Gentlemen, relating to Divinity, Philosophy, Love, Marriage, History, Physick, Law, Mathematicks, Trade, &c. from Tuesday, Decemb. 18. to Saturday, March 30. 1695.

Lachrymæ Sacerdotis. A Pindarick Poem Occasion'd by the Death of that most excellent Princess, our late Gracious Sovereign Lady, Mary the Second of Glorious memory. By Henry Park, Curate of Wentworth in Yorkshire. All Four printed for John Dunton, at the Raven in Jewen-street. And are also to be sold by Edm. Richardson, near the Poultry-Church.

If any Minister's Widow, or other person have any Library or parcel of books to dispose of, if they will send a Catalogue of them, or notice where they are, to John Dunton, at the Raven in Jewen-street, they shall have Ready Money for them, to the full of what they are worth.

April 29. — 95. Lost a Gold Gray'd Watch-Case, dropt between Fleetstreet and Red-Cross-Street, who ever gives notice of it to Mr. Joseph Foster, Watch-maker in Exchange-Alley, shall have 20 s. Reward; and if Pawn'd, their money again.